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Special Analysis**USSR:****Foreign Policy Under Gorbachev**

General Secretary Gorbachev has moved quickly to assert his primacy in Soviet foreign policy and has emerged as the USSR's principal foreign policy spokesman. So far he appears to be hewing to established policy lines, but his impact may eventually result in bolder Soviet diplomacy. Gorbachev's steps to take charge of Soviet diplomacy probably come at the expense of the expanded role Foreign Minister Gromyko gained under Chernenko, but Gromyko remains a central player on Gorbachev's team.

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Despite the press of domestic business, Gorbachev has received a steady stream of European and Third World leaders, as well as two delegations from the US. He has taken the lead in these discussions, relegating Gromyko to a supporting role. Most visitors have remarked on his straightforward approach, his frankness, and his grasp of substantive issues.

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Some Soviet officials have claimed that Gromyko—as a member of Brezhnev's Old Guard—is on Gorbachev's hit list and will be replaced. The adversaries Gromyko has attracted in 30 years at the top of the foreign policy bureaucracy undoubtedly believe the time is auspicious to move against him.

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knowledgeable Soviets suggest that Gromyko has allied himself closely with Gorbachev, a judgment supported by the choice of Gromyko to nominate Gorbachev for General Secretary.

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Implications for the US

Gorbachev is already in a position to make his presence felt on Soviet policy toward the US. He apparently intends to expand bilateral exchanges, and he probably sanctioned the return to the bargaining table in Geneva during Chernenko's final illness. Gorbachev's initial statements suggest, however, that he and his colleagues do not believe early progress in US-Soviet relations is likely.

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Gorbachev's strategy, like that of his immediate predecessors, appears designed to blunt current policies of the US by cultivating its European allies and encouraging domestic opposition to the administration's policies toward the USSR.

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Moscow's cat-and-mouse game on the matter of a US-Soviet summit fits well with this strategy; Soviet leaders apparently believe it is better to be courted than to appear too eager for dialogue. At the same time, the summit may have become entangled with power relations in the Politburo. Some Eastern Bloc observers believe Gorbachev favors an early get-acquainted summit, while Gromyko opposes it. In early May, candidate Politburo member Vladimir Dolgikh—who is not a Gorbachev ally—told the US Ambassador in Prague that, since Gorbachev as yet holds no government office, a summit this fall may not be possible. [redacted]

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Gorbachev probably believes his personal prestige would be enhanced by a high-profile meeting with President Reagan under the right conditions. It is unlikely, however, that he would expend political capital within the Politburo to win endorsement of an early summit unless he is persuaded there is a prospect of tangible gain for the USSR. [redacted]

Prospects

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If the veteran Foreign Minister is willing to assume the role of chief tactician under an activist General Secretary—a part he willingly played for most of his career—Gromyko's position is probably secure for the time being. Gorbachev, however, has already started moving new people into leadership positions, and the government's foreign policy bureaucracy is not likely to be spared indefinitely. [redacted]

A shakeup in the party's foreign policy apparatus would probably come first. [redacted]

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Over the longer term, it seems likely that the political strength and activism Gorbachev has already shown in domestic affairs will be mirrored by bolder efforts to undermine relations between the US and its allies. Gorbachev probably calculates that such actions will enhance his image as a formidable adversary and contribute to his domestic political momentum. [redacted]

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